Voltaire And The French Academy

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French Academy: Académie Française, French literary academy, consisting of 40 members, established in 1634 by Cardinal Richelieu. Its original purpose was to maintain standards of literary taste and to establish the literary language. It has existed to the present day, except for a period starting during the French Revolution. The original purpose of the French Academy was to maintain standards of literary taste and to establish the literary language. Its membership is limited to 40. Voltaire's and other French Enlightenment philosophes' emphasis on reason above feeling would provoke a reaction during the Romantic era in the arts and literature, as well as in religious expression, notably in such theologians as Friedrich Schleiermacher. Yet the humanistic thought of Voltaire would remain an important current in the nineteenth century. Voltaire is well known for his defense of civil liberties, including freedom of religion and the right to a fair trial. He was an outspoken supporter of social reform despite strict censorship laws in France and harsh penalties for those who broke them. A satirical polemist, he frequently made use of his works to criticize Church dogma and the French institutions of his day. His polemics against the Church could be quite devastating.